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Austria

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus Confirmed in Austria

Report Categories:

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

In early November 2016, a number of dead wild water fowl has been found at the Austrian shore of Lake Constance. In total ten birds of water fowl (mostly tufted duck) have been tested positive on the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N8. On November 11, the occurrence of H5N8 in a commercial Austrian free range turkey flock in the vicinity of Lake Constance has been confirmed. The animals of the turkey flock have been culled and the plant subsequently cleaned and disinfected. Test results for a second suspicious poultry flock (broilers) are not confirmed yet. Final results are expected on November 14. The Austrian Ministry of Health has established protection and surveillance zones around the outbreak.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus H5N8 in Austrian Wild Water Fowl Population

Since the first weekend in November, more than hundred dead water birds (mostly tufted ducks) have been discovered around Lake Constance; not only at the Austrian shore of the lake but also in the neighboring countries Germany and Switzerland. Lake Constance is located at the very west of Austria. In Austria, so far ten birds of wild water fowl (tufted ducks, pochards and not further specified birds of the genus “Numididae”) have tested positive on the highly pathogenic virus H5N8. The current accumulation of the disease is most likely due to the migration of wild birds to southern regions. After the positive H5N8 findings in wild birds, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women (further: health ministry) established a one kilometer wide protection zone around Lake Constance.

First Confirmed Outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus H5N8 in an Austrian Commercial Turkey Flock

On November 11, 2016, the Austrian health ministry confirmed the occurrence of highly pathogenic H5N8 virus in a free-range organic turkey farm at the Lake Constance in the federal state Vorarlberg. After findings of suspicious dead animals, the turkey farm, which is located in the close vicinity of the location of the positive tested wild birds, has immediately been blocked. When the positive test results had been confirmed all 1,100 animals of the farm were culled and carcasses were destroyed. The plant has been cleaned and disinfected subsequently. A speaker of the health ministry stated that there is no danger for consumers as there is so far no evidence that the subtype H5N8 is dangerous for humans.

A protection zone (radius at least 3 km) and a surveillance zone (radius at least 10 km) are established around the affected operation. Within the protection zone, all poultry holdings are inspected by an official veterinarian.

Specific measures that apply within the protection zone:

- Reporting obligation for events with poultry and other birds
- Poultry and other domestic birds have to be permanently kept within stables
- It is prohibited to water poultry and other domestic birds with water that can also be used by wild birds
- Transport and loading facilities and devices which have been in contact with poultry have to be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly
- Reporting obligations for
 - poultry flocks which reduce water intake
 - reduced laying performance
 - increased mortality of poultry

Second Suspected Case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus H5N8 in an Austrian Commercial Poultry Flock

A second suspected case of H5N8 virus in an Austrian broiler operation has been reported on November 11, 2016. 80 animals have been taken for testing. The final result is expected for late Monday, November 14. The broiler plant has a size of 4,000 broilers which have to be culled in case of a positive test result.